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The Play of *Logos* and *Pathos*: Longinus' Philosophical Presuppositions

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᾽Αναλήπτομαι.
Μέ τή μύτη στήν ἄσφαλτο
μετρῶ τήν ἀπόσταση.
(Πάει μακριά αὐτό τό κορμί.)
Σιωπηλός ὁ θεός κοιτάζει τά νῶτα μου,
ἐνῶ γελώντας ἐγώ
πίσω μου σ᾽ ἔχω – κραυγάζω – οὐρανέ!

᾽Αναλήπτομαι. Μέσα στήν πτώση.
Μέ μιά πτήση βαρύγδουπη.
Κι ἐλαφριά. ᾽Αφοῦ στό χαρτί.

Τάσος Καπερνάρος[1]

Introduction

Longinus' treatise, the first monograph on the sublime, is neither a rhetorical manual, nor a straight-forward philosophical work. The sublime is usually regarded as a literary quality. But it is clear that the concerns of *Περί ὕψους* (On the Sublime) go far beyond criticism, engaged as it is on a number of perennial philosophical issues, such as human nature. My aim is to identify the philosophical presuppositions which underpin ὕψος.[2] This will be done with reference to Longinus' notions of logos and pathos.

I will examine the Subject – Object relation with reference το ὕψος. In the second section, "In the Straitjacket", I will argue that Elder Olson's

1 Kapernaros, 1997:32–33.

2 Ὕψος literally means "height" and the conceptual metaphor of an upward movement of the soul should always be kept in mind.

explication of the sublime as a natural quality residing in the Object does not square with Longinus' outlook. In the third section, "The Theatre of the Sublime", I will follow Ernesto Grassi in arguing that *Περί ὕψους* is aware of the ontological difference[3] and that, therefore, ὕψος privileges neither the Subject nor the Object. The *play* of logos and pathos describes that movement of ὕψος between Subject and Object which is made manifest in language.

We know nothing about the real name of the author of the treatise and we are unsure whether it was written in the first or the third century A.D.[4] And we only know approximately two thirds of the text. Actually, it is a small miracle that the treatise has survived: there is no mention of it in antique or medieval literature,[5] and the earliest, tenth century, manuscript could easily have remained unnoticed, had it not been translated in 1674 by Boileau.[6]

But these uncertainties seem to have only excited the imagination of the readers, who have often heard a congenial voice in Longinus. For instance, Harold Bloom in the first sentence of a self-review characterises his critical stance as Longinian, in the sense that "our author [Bloom] remains unphilosophical, believing as he does that Longinus began criticism's quarrel

3 By the ontological difference Grassi means (following Heidegger) the underivability of being from individual beings by rational means.

4 Initially "Longinus" was thought to refer to Cassius Longinus, the third century rhetorician – e.g. Korais, 1998:164 refers to the author of *Περί ὕψους* as a contemporary of Plotinus. However, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, scholars have noted that the name of the author in the oldest manuscript is ambiguous and that textual evidence points to the first century AD as a more likely time of composition. For a general discussion of the history of attribution and dating, see Russell, 1964:xxii–xxx. For the most comprehensive argument for the dating in the first century, see Crossett & Arieti, 1975. For the latest attempt to argue for a third century date, see Heath, 1999. I take as a mistake unsubstantiated second century datings, e.g. Mothersill, 1997:407.

5 A couple of references to a Longinus in the eleventh century rhetorician John of Sicily need not refer to the author of *Περί ὕψους* – see Russell, 1964:xxv–xxviii. There has also been debate about the references to Cassius Longinus in Photius – see Heath, 1998.

6 For a succinct account of the editions as well as the reception of the treatise from the sixteenth century to the present, see Macksey, 1993:924-32. Besides the well attested influence of *Περί ὕψους* in France, England, and Germany, it is also worth noting Italy – see Costa, 1981. D.A. Russell's translation (Russell, 1965) is recommended for the general reader.

with philosophy."[7] The wide-spread appeal may be due to Longinus' comparative method: he quotes from Greek, Latin and Judaic literature, and freely moves from poetry to history, and from rhetoric to philosophy.[8]

The treatise is addressed to Terentianus, Longinus' student. Its aim, as stated in the first paragraph, is twofold: to precisely describe ὕψος and to present ὕψος as teachable.

Chapter 8 lists the five sources of ὕψος. The most important is "the conception of great thoughts."[9] Then come "strong emotions".[10] The first two sources are "for the most part 'natural'."[11] The other three sources are derived from art. Third come figures,[12] which are distinguished from fourth, tropes and diction.[13] And last comes the harmonious synthesis of the elements and thoughts of the text.

We should note, first, that the sources are not necessary and sufficient conditions for the attainment of ὕψος.[14] Thus, the sources should not be

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7 Bloom, 1988:426. For a discussion of Bloom's reception of Longinus, see Hart, 1993, *passim*.

8 The famous quotation from Genesis (*Περί ὕψους*, 9.9) has provoked a number of speculations. For a recent interpretation see West, 1995.

9 τό περί τάς νοήσεις ἀδρεπήβολον (8.1)

10 τό σφοδρόν καί ἐνθουσιαστικόν πάθος – ibid.

11 κατά τό πλέον αὐθιγενεῖς συστάσεις– ibid. There have been a number of different translations of αὐθιγενεῖς συστάσεις: "innate dispositions" (Grube, 1957); "natural" (Russell, 1965); "congenital constituents" (Fyfe, 1995); "self-bred constituents" (Arieti & Crossett, 1985); "native-born constituents" (Prickard, 1926); "innate components" (Roberts, 1907); "φυσικά χαρίσματα" (Kopidakis, 1990); "natürlicher Anlage" (Brandt, 1966).

12 One should be careful not to assume that "figures" here corresponds to the usual meaning of the term in the rhetorical manuals: rather, ἡ σχημάτων πλάσις, seems to mean later (ch. 16–29) "some abnormal arrangement of words or expression of thought" (Russell, 1964:126).

13 What Longinus calls ἡ γενναία φράσις (8.1).

14 For instance, Longinus asserts that certain emotions, usually called the low emotions, e.g. οἶκτοι λῦπαι φόβοι ("pity, grief, and fear"; Fyfe, 1995:8.2), do not partake of sublimity, while the high emotions do, e.g. φοβερά ("terrible"; Fyfe, 1995:9.7) and δεινά ("awe-inspiring"; Fyfe, 1995:10.4). For an analysis of Longinus' use of high and low emotions and about that distinction in ancient literature in general, see Innes, 1995. According to 8.3–4 the sublime can be achieved without the involvement of pathos, but notice that here Longinus is referring to the pathos of the author (cf. Grube, 1957:11, ft.1). Also, great thoughts are not sufficient, as is made clear by Longinus' remarks on Euripides.

taken as an essentialist definition of the sublime, nor as a full description of its characteristics. Second, due to the lack of a formal definition, one should pay special attention to a host of metaphors which are used throughout the treatise: for instance, ὕψος is often described as creating an inner upward movement. Stylistic elements in the treatise are not merely decorative, they are also argumentative.[15] Third, ὕψος in a work is always everywhere and for everyone. Longinus means that ὕψος as such is constant, not that the reception of each individual part of the work is constant.[16] And, fourth, Longinus explicitly states the usefulness of ὕψος for public life.[17] This does not merely introduce a political element; furthermore, it entails that ὕψος does away with the dichotomy theory – practice: ὕψος has to be discussed in terms of its present historical realisation.[18]

Having circumscribed the "field of action" of the Longinian ὕψος, we turn to Olson's reading of the treatise.

Olson: In the Straitjacket

Olson starts from the Object arguing that the sublime is found in the text: here it is instantiated, from here it is transmitted. Logos is the text, the

15 For instance, Longinus often represents his argument by using the form that the content of his language is discussing. Such self-conscious language is definitely argumentative, and the conceptual content of the treatise is more often than not presented in this manner. Longinus' tendency to ὑψηγορεῖ (write in sublime language) when he talks about the sublime has been often noted. For further examples see Innes, 1994:48–50.

16 The text is ambiguous on this point: ἔν τι καί ταὐτόν ἅμα περί τῶν αὐτῶν ἅπασιν δοκῇ (7.4) does not necessarily mean that "different people have a uniform judgment regarding the *whole* of the work." Indeed, such a suggestion would seem out of place, since Longinus is talking here specifically about sublimity and no other features; also, it is out of place in the whole of the treatise, which does not make any more allusions to it; further, if the measure of merit is ὕψος itself, one need not look elsewhere for a judgment of the value of the work *as a whole*, which is different from the judgments of its individual parts – e.g. Longinus makes judgments of *individual elements* of Euripides which are not sublime, but he would argue that Euripides's work is sublime. So, it seems more natural to interpret the passage as saying that "different people have the same judgment about one feature of the work, namely its *sublimity*."

17 1.2 – an idea he returns to in the last chapter.

18 Cf. Grassi, 1994:63.

essence of the sublime is its passive effect. According to this materialist line, "conception and passion are independent of words"[19] – moreover, they are independent of each other: in Olson's scheme, the first source, conception, is attributable to the author, the second, passions, to the audience, and the last three (figures, diction, synthesis) to the text.

Olson's privileging of the object is explicit: "*Certain things* are by nature sublime."[20] Man is by nature equipped to perceive the sublime, and the great thought of the genius is the conception which mirrors the sublime object and captures the passions of the audience. The work of art is the referent of the sublime object: it appeals to the senses of the recipients, stirring their emotions and leading always to the same effect: ἔκστασις.[21] Longinus has become Aristotelian: means and ends operate on the practical level, causes and effects on the theoretical. The sublime, as end or effect, is a universalised psychological state, an affect. Everything Longinus says about human nature is explained in terms of psychology providing the cause of the sublime, and the means are the work of art itself: "*hypsos* is to all literature what catharsis is to tragedy," is Theoharis' revealing summary of this approach.[22]

What is so characteristic of this approach is the stark distinction between the author's perception of the sublime object and the work, the referent of that object. These are irreconcilably different in kind; yet, with regard to the effect or end of the sublime the distinction collapses into a psychological state. To put it in another way, the language of the text *qua* the sublime object functions simultaneously and distinctly as the thought of and the reference to that object; the language *qua* sublimity functions as

19 Olson, 1952:246.

20 Olson, 1952:257, my emphasis.

21 Ecstasy – Olson translates as "transport".

22 Theoharis, 1978:59, ft.16. For Olson, the difference between Aristotle and Longinus is this: "Whereas Aristotle discriminates among kinds of works and uses this discrimination as a principle of his treatment of them [...] Longinus obliterates ultimately all such distinctions of kinds and end and makes the focal point of his inquiry a certain quality discriminated from among other qualities of composition" (1952:236).

the transmutation of the object into pathos. In the definition of logos as text, what is inadmissible is a function of language *qua* thought: language cannot "think", thought is not self-reflexive, language is either a concept *or* a reference.[23] Logos becomes a sort of second order function of the Object, while the pathos, as the effect of logos, is further demoted to a third order function. This rationalist approach views *Περί ὕψους* as a logical structure in which every element finds an interdependent placing. So much so, that Olson claims that the content of the lacunae is deducible.

To achieve such assurance, Olson had to limit logos to a referent. This rigid restriction, compared to the vibrant self-reflexivity of Longinus' language, makes this approach look like a straitjacket which would disintegrate when one lets the text speak for itself. Take, for instance, Longinus' handling of Homer's theomachy: "Homer, in recording the woundings, quarrels, vengeances, tears, imprisonments, and manifold passions of the gods, has done his best to make in the *Iliad* the men gods and the gods men."[24] What makes this passage remarkable, is Longinus' own ὑψηγορία [25] in order to describe the sublime. Notice the quickening motion of the asyndeton and the grand impression of the plurals which are figures contributing to the sublime[26] and which lead up to the great thought expressed by the chiasmus. Longinus is playing by his own rules – a feature which has been much admired, for example by Alexander Pope who praised the bold Longinus, "Whose own Example strengthens all his laws, / And is himself that great

23 Implicitly criticising the reading of the treatise by the Chicagoan Aristotelian, Paul H. Fry says: "The quality that gets transmitted [*hypsos*] can be understood either as language or as spirit but it cannot be divided into language *and* spirit, language and thought, or language and reference" (1983:49).

24 9.7, my translation based on Fyfe, 1995.

25 "sublime discourse" – cf. footnote 15.

26 Cf. Longinus' discussion on the asyndeton in 19.2: "The phrases being disconnected, and yet none the less rapid, give the idea of an agitation which both checks the utterance and at the same time drives it on" (Fyfe, 1995); of plurals in 23.2: "the plurals sometimes make a grander impression (μεγαλορρημονέστερα), courting favour by the sense of multitude given by the grammatical number" (idem).

Sublime he draws".[27] Unless this self-referentiality is overlooked or denied, an analysis according to Olson's precepts will lead to paradoxes. So, if we accept that our passage is sublime, what is, then, the external object that gives the passage its sublimity? It cannot be Homer's verses, because they are a text, and thus they must themselves be a reference to a sublime object. Let us suppose, then, that the object is the image of the theomachy. Now, this solution makes Longinus' comments logically tautological: for it implies that *any* proposition which has a sublime component is itself sublime. Thus, Olson would have to concede that the opposite of what Longinus says is also sublime: "Homer [...] has not done his best to make in the *Iliad* the men gods [...]". But this is an absurd conclusion which we cannot possibly tolerate: it says, in effect, that the Longinian sublime is indifferent to conceptual content.

Olson might deny that in the theomachy example there is a tautology in the sense that the cause of the sublime is Homer's text itself which can be taken as an external sublime object.[28] This amounts to saying that the sublime object, when it is a quotation, need not be external after all. It is doubtful that Olson could claim that without doing violence to his own description of the logical distinctness of the sources of sublimity. For in this case the logos (quoted text) and the sublime object coincide. But even so, we are still faced with paradoxes. Because this states that in the case of quotation the text (Olson's third distinct source of the sublime) is somehow more important than the conception (first source) of the author quoting that text. In other words, Olson would have to admit here that the logos is *superordinate* to the idea that the author conveys. But, then, how would Olson explain Longinus' commenting in sublime manner on a text which is *not* sublime? For example, in 3.1 Longinus claims that striving too hard for sublimity can become a self-parody (παρατράγωδα). He gives an extract of a tragedy

27 Pope, 1736:133. Gibbon asked in his *Journal* for 3 September 1762: "Which is the more sublime, Homer's Battle of the Gods or Longinus' apostrophe to Terentianus upon it."

28 I.e., Olson might deny that what causes the sublimity of Longinus' words is the image of the theomachy contained in Homer's text. In order to avoid the tautology, Olson might take instead the Homeric text itself as the sublime object of Longinus' sublimity.

which mixes up sounds and images. Longinus comments: τεθόλωται γάρ τῇ φράσει καί τεθορύβηται ταῖς φαντασίαις (it darkens the sounds and deafens the sights). By mixing up his own verbs and objects, and drawing attention to the phrase by the alliteration, Longinus' harmonious language produces a sublime effect. Nevertheless, this should be for Olson a clear example of a quoted logos which is *subordinate* to the conception of the author who does the quoting. In the example of 3.1 what takes precedence is not the quoted author; rather, what takes precedence in order to identify the sublime object is Longinus' conception. To be consistent with his idea of the distinctness of the sources, Olson would now have to give a further qualification: in cases of quotation, the quoted text is the sublime object *only if* that text is sublime itself. Thus, the tautology which he tried to deny comes to haunt him again: for how can Olson know that a text is sublime unless he is able to identify its external sublime object?

Besides the amusing logical paradoxes that the text itself generates in this reading, what ultimately undermines Olson's approach is its inability to account for the interplay of logos and pathos. Due to Olson's insistence on the distinctness of the sources of sublimity, logos and pathos are assigned their spheres of function which are in no way allowed to interact. What operates here is a rationalist metaphysics which sees the logos determined by "Objective reality" and the pathos as the innate disposition to apprehend this process. The primacy of the Object is nowhere more obvious than in Olson's contention that the "passions are not [...] open to voluntary acquisition."[29] Longinus is presented to us as drawing a sharp distinction between the passive Subject and the true Object, the latter exemplified in the passionlessness of the gods.[30] The fact that the distinctness of logos and pathos leads, as we showed, to insurmountable paradoxes says nothing about Longinus' concepts – but it does tell us that any attempt to fit ὕψος into a rationalist metaphysics is false.

29 Olson, 1952:258; see also pp. 236–40 & 255–57.

30 "The gods are passionless" (Olson, 1952:257) – but Olson must have overlooked the example of the Homeric theomachy (Longinus, 9.7) which is explicitly based on the suffering of the gods.

Grassi: The Theatre of the Sublime

Ernesto Grassi's reading orientates logos in the completely opposite direction: "The experience of the sublime language is *determining of place and time in reality*."[31] In this reading, Longinus is well-aware that it is impossible to move from an individual Object to a substance. Hence, the summons to the logos as the Word which has the ability, when it is sublime, to create the "clearing" where reality reveals itself.

In contrast to Olson, Grassi translates αὐθιγενεῖς as "indigenous or aboriginal" in the sense that it has the capacity of becoming manifest – that is, the logos is the source of itself.[32] Human nature, then, is not seen as antithetical to the divine, rather, it is striving towards and pertaining to the θεῖον.[33] And textual evidence supports Grassi's reading: for instance, Longinus' text on the theomachy continues after the anthropomorphic chiasmus (Homer made the men gods and the gods men) with a remarkable *theomorphism*: ἀλλ' ημῖν μέν δυσδαιμονοῦσιν ἀπόκειται λιμήν κακῶν ὁ θάνατος, τῶν θεῶν δ' οὐ τήν φύσιν, ἀλλά τήν ἀτυχίαν ἐποίησεν αἰώνιον.[34]

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31 Grassi, 1994:67, italics in the text. The achievement of Grassi's work is his demonstration that, contra Heidegger, a host of post-socratic writers are well aware of the ontological difference.

32 Grassi, 1994:66-67.

33 "Let us keep in mind the kind of lexicon Longinus turns to when he speaks of this sublime passion: *enthousiastikón, enthousiazo, entheazo* are terms which point to the condition of one who is 'inspired,' to the state of one who is entheos, who has within himself that which is sacred and integral. This sacredness, this divinity is deeply felt in the passionate experience of the noetic project of the word which discloses primordial knowledge" (Grassi, 1994:67–68).

34 (9.7). Notice how Longinus breaks the speed of the preceding sentence, not only by including a proverb in iambic (λιμήν κακῶν ὁ θάνατος), but also by condensing a thought in a word (δυσδαιμονοῦσιν) with a double nuance. Notice also that the grammatical subjects of the antithetical sentences are θάνατος and Homer. Cf. also 2.3 where Longinus says that is the natural gift of writing – if we put the two passages together, then we have the human on the one level, which is characterised as δυσδαιμονεῖν, εὐτυχεῖν and mortal, as opposed to the divine which is δαιμόνιον, represented as ἀτυχεῖν by a sublime writer, and immortal. I am thinking here of δυσδαιμονοῦσιν as roughly synonymous to *Mängelwesen* (the lacking being) – see Hans Blumenberg's influential article "An Anthropological Approach to the Contemporary Significance of Rhetoric" (Blumenberg, 1987).

The common translation is "to us and our sorrows the harbour of our sufferings is death, but he [Homer] not the nature but the misfortunes of the gods made everlasting,"[35] rendering the affective meaning of δυσδαιμονοῦσιν – man's sorrows. Yet, given (1) the drift of the whole chapter which points out the divinizing power of the sublime; (2) the chiasmus of the preceding sentence; (3) the description of the divine nature as δαιμόνιον in the immediately following sentence; and (4) the description of the irresistible love of the human soul for what is δαιμονιώτερον in 35.2 – given these four points, the *theomorphism* of the etymology of δυσδαιμονοῦσιν could not have been lost to the Greek reader. Thus, we read the text as: "to us, *whose nature is defectively divine*, the harbour of our sufferings (*defects*) is death." This existential pronouncement associates ὕψος with death: elevation can only be achieved because we are human, or, to put it formally, death is a necessary condition of sublimity. But, inherent in the assonance of the δυσδαιμονοῦσιν mortal and the immortal δαιμόνιον is the natural uplifting of man in contact with the sublime.

It follows, then, that logos is not innate and does not admit of a conception of human nature as a fixed structure emanating from firm objects; instead, since logos is "aboriginal" (Grassi), the word reveals that being, the primarily real is accessible through the word. This function of the word cannot be seen in abstraction, as a formal or logical relation, because then logos will become a synonym of rationality which requires the primacy of the external object for its legitimisation. Here is the relevance of Longinus' comment that the sublime is useful for public life: logos is grounded by human doings, it is not just a matter of theory, logos is also praxis. This fundamental historicity of logos is the sublime's πάθη.[36] The reception of the

35 According to LSJ, this is the only instance of the verb. The German word *unselig*, having both an emotive as well as a religious content, is well suited to translate δυσδαιμονοῦσιν, e.g. "Aber uns, die unseligen Menschen, erwartet als Hafen unserer Leiden der Tod" (Brandt, 1966:45). All English translations I have cited in the bibliography render the emotive meaning of δυσδαιμονοῦσιν.

36 "passions" – see Grassi, 1994:69.

experience of the word is pathetic, that is, both the logos of the author presupposes a passionate reception of reality which is not ontic, and, also, the spectator cannot receive the logos of the author without that same kind of pathos. In this giving of the logos and receiving of the πάθη the grammatical subject and object is reality. In other words, we cannot say that the logos belongs solely to the author and the πάθη solely to the spectator because they are ontologically interdependent. As Grassi puts it,

> Passion discloses reality, it raises the curtain on a play of which we are both the actors and the spectators. The power of nature manifests itself through, and subsists in, sublime language, pointing to its own ways and archetypes, sources of original images, places of the true sacredness of 'reality'.[37]

The metaphorical description of the play of logos and pathos as a theatrical play is found in *Περί ὕψους*. It appears first at the discussion on mimesis and then at the digressive chapter 35. An analysis of this image will depict all the crucial elements which constitute the existentialism and anti-materialism of Longinus. There are three meanings in the word mimesis. First, it is that of enactment, which describes someone present who acts out a coded action, such as a dance or a play, which is viewed by spectators.[38] Second, is the meaning of *imitatio* or emulation, a standard feature of the rhetorical manuals with didactic implications: one has to copy the greats in order to excel. In these two meanings human action and presence are crucial. Not so in the third, the metaphysically loaded notion of mimesis as a representation of reality – here the paradigm of Republic X springs immediately to mind.

The first two meanings are easily discernible in the theatre metaphor of chapter 14. Emulation is described as a battle with the greats[39] which is

37 Grassi, 1994:70.

38 The very influential study about this aspect of mimesis is Koller, 1954 which argues that the original meaning of mimesis consists in presentation through dancing.

39 Longinus says that sublimity is impossible unless one is willing to comport himself towards Homer "like a young antagonist with one who had already won his spurs, perhaps in too keen emulation, longing as it were to break a lance" (Fyfe, 1995 – the Greek reads: "ὡς ἀνταγωνιστής νέος πρός ἤδη τεθαυμασμένον, ἴσως μέν φιλονικότερον καί οἱονεί διαδοραματιζόμενος", 13.4).

worthy because, even if defeated, τό ἡττᾶσθαι τῶν προγεννεστέρων οὐκ ἄδοξον.[40] For best mimetic practice, says Longinus further, one has to imagine that he is in a theatre where the greats are present (παρών) as judges and spectators.[41] But the metaphysical import of chapter 14 is not clear. Indeed, a neo-Platonic interpretation of this passage is possible: all that is needed for that is to equate ὕψος with a form or idea; for example, one can equate ὕψος with the καλόν (good, beautiful) in art, and then argue that Longinus makes the greats spectators to the creation of copies of forms or individual beings. All we have done is to substitute the deity in *Timaeus* observing the original chaos of the cosmos with the divine artist who observes the creation of the art-work.[42] Here, then, ὕψος becomes transcendent, and a gaze of it is but a shadow in a cave.

But any suspicion of neo-Platonism is dispersed in the second use of the theatre metaphor. We learn here that we are not solely actors observed from beyond, but also spectators of the metaphysical drama. "Nature [...] brought us into this life and into the whole universe as into a great celebration, to be spectators of her whole performance and the most ambitious actors."[43] Man is predisposed to participate in the play of the receiving pathos and the giving logos. The text continues:

> She [nature] implanted at once into our souls an invincible love for all that is great and more divine than ourselves. That is why the whole universe gives

40 "where even to be worsted by our forerunners is not without glory" (Fyfe, 1995:13.4).

41 14.2. Longinus combines the meanings of *imitatio* and presentation in a pun: in 13.2 he says that the genius of the greats affects those who strive to emulate them ὡς ἀπό ἱερῶν στομίων ἀπόρροιαί τινες. Here, στομίων can mean both the chasm from which the Pythia's vapours flowed and, literally, the mouth, from which the prophetic words of the greats flowed (cf. Kopidakis, 1990:232 – thus, the passage can be translated either as having an effect "similar to the divine vapours of the Delphic oracle", or as having the same effect "as the words uttered by [coming from the mouth of] the priestess"). Therefore, I disagree with D.A. Russell who says about this same passage that "this way of looking at *mimesis* is original" (1979:11); the pun merely encapsulates both the early meaning of presentation and the later one of *imitatio*. For a different interpretation of the same passage see Walsh, 1988:266-67.

42 *Timaeus* 28b, 29a, 30a.

43 35.2, Grube, 1957.

> insufficient scope to man's powers of contemplation and reflection, but his thoughts often pass beyond the boundaries of the surrounding world.[44]

This crossing over the boundaries is bound up with the sublime: ὕψος is the stepping over the perceived limits of the world and the entering into the existential theatre where the distinction between actor and spectator is dissolved by the play of logos and pathos. This is a heightening of the soul, which is not taking us into an "other", transcendent dimension, but attracts us to the fundamental historicity of our existence. It is relevant, practicable and timely, καίριος or εὔκαιρος, as Longinus calls it.[45]

Last Words

The last words of summary are left to Grassi, whose reading we have been following:

> Language which expresses and communicates the sublime is not an individual creation but a natural occurrence, a reality we are made to experience with passion. [...] While traditional metaphysics, through the rational process, strives to identify nature with the multiplicity of individual beings, Longinus' point of departure is language as the manifestation of the power of mystery, of the abyss, and of the sublime. Every dualism of nature and spirit [...] thus ceases to exist. The mystery of language is no longer made manifest by the rational definition of individual beings; it is revealed through its function of initiating man into history. And here man must be interpreted as the being capable of the passionate experience of language.[46]

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44 35.2–3, idem. Notice that what Longinus says about human nature (going *beyond the boundaries* of the world) in order to justify the "aboriginality" of ὕψος is reminiscent of the etymology of the translation of ὕψος into Latin: *sublimis* (from *sub* = after, beyond and *limen* = lintel, limit).

45 E.g. 1.4, 10.1 and 22.4, 32.4.

46 Grassi, 1994:71.

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